

HISTORY

The California Traffic Control Devices Committee is an outgrowth of the California State Sign Committee.

The State Sign Committee was organized about October 1933, after the first signed contract between the State and the two automobile clubs. Membership in the first committee consisted of the State Maintenance Engineer, Chief Engineer for the California State Automobile Association, and the Field Engineer for the Automobile Club of Southern California. The automobile clubs performed all signing functions on State Highways until 1947. In 1938, Mr. Vickery, the first State Traffic Engineer, became a member of the committee.

Sometime after 1948, committee membership was expanded to include representation from the California Highway Patrol, the Institute of Traffic and Transportation Engineering of the University of California, the League of California Cities and the County Supervisors Association of California.

In April 1968, after deliberations over a sixteen-month period, the committee was reorganized with the adoption of By-Laws by the six parent-organizations. These organizations are: the Department of Transportation, the California Highway Patrol, the League of California Cities, the County Supervisors Association of California, the Automobile Club of Southern California and the California State Automobile Association. The scope of the committee was broadened, as the new name "California Traffic Control Devices Committee" indicates, to include all devices rather than signs only.

The Institute of Transportation Studies and the regional office of the Federal Highway Administration serve the Committee as technical advisors. Legal services are provided by the State Department of Transportation.

In 1969 the California Legislature enacted legislation which made the role of the Traffic Control Devices Committee even more important than before. At that time the Legislature deleted all provisions from the Vehicle Code which specified standards for traffic control devices, and enacted all-encompassing Sections 21400 and 21401.

Section 21400 requires that the Department of Transportation, after consultation with local authorities, adopt uniform standards for all traffic control devices to be used on California streets and highways.

Section 21401 provides that only those official traffic control devices conforming to the standards promulgated by the State Department of Transportation shall be placed on a highway.

Three things in these code sections are worthy of consideration. The code makes the Department of Transportation the responsible agency for standards to be used in California; it requires consultation with the local authorities in the development of these standards; and finally, no other devices, other than those adopted, may be used in California.

The California Traffic Control Devices Committee has been officially recognized as the advisory body to the State's Director of Transportation in the area of traffic control devices. It is through this committee that Caltrans fulfills the requirement to consult with local authorities in developing standards for traffic control devices.

The California Traffic Control Devices Committee and the California Department of Transportation are working together to keep the State's Traffic Manual updated. This Manual represents the basic standards and specifications prescribed in the Vehicle Code Sections 21400 and 21401. It is a working tool which is constantly under review to incorporate the developing science and technology of traffic engineering. It is the shared opinion of the Department of Transportation and the Traffic Control Devices Committee that input to the Manual should be solicited from all agencies and organizations who are affected by its provisions.

It should be recognized that not all devices specified in the Manual on Traffic Control Devices have been adopted for use on California streets and highways. Where there is a difference between the State Traffic Manual and the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, the State Traffic Manual has precedence.

As previously mentioned, the California Traffic Control Devices Committee includes representatives of the League of California Cities and of the County Supervisors Association. These representatives as well as Caltrans and the two auto clubs have undertaken an active communications program to make new developments known to all working levels of government and to invite input by all levels of government. The Manual is no longer

a Department of transportation Planning Manual. It is a State Traffic manual, and needs your input to make it a better working tool for all agencies.